

11-15 North Broad Street (Commercial Buildings)
(Dunham's Department Store)
Trenton
Mercer County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-969

HABS
NJ,
11-TRET,
14-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 10106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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(Dunham's Department Store) HABS No. NJ-969

Location: 11-15 North Broad Street, Trenton, Mercer County,
New Jersey.

Last Owner: Plapinger-Platt Downtown Properties

Last Occupant: Dunham's Department Store

Last Use: Commercial - retail

The building at 11-15 North Broad Street was demolished in
September 1987 to make way for new commercial construction.

Significance: Dunham's Department Store began as the Scudder and
Dunham Dry Goods Store at 13 North Broad Street in
1883. The firm's success and growth made it Trenton's
largest retailer by the 1930's, and it dominated this
block of town in the mid-20th century.

The core of Dunham's was three adjacent Italianate
style commercial buildings at 11, 13, and 15 North
Broad Street, built as a commercial block in 1867,
known at the time as Lafayette Row. The storefronts
were redesigned and the buildings of the row joined
internally in 1905. Throughout the 20th century,
Dunham's expanded their selling area and offices by
purchasing adjacent buildings and creating internal
access to them, although the core of the store
remained at the original location on Broad Street.
Dunham's aggressively pursued a program of
modernization, remodeling and updating their
buildings every decade. This could not reverse the
movement to the suburbs of many of their customers in
the 1950s and '60s, so Dunham's opened satellite
stores in malls surrounding Trenton. These remain in
business, but the flagship store on Broad Street was
closed in 1983, succumbing to the general decline of
downtown Trenton during this time.

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Part I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1867; major alterations 1905, 1926, 1955.
2. Architect: Not Known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Chain of Title reference from the Mercer County Hall of Records:

11 North Broad Street

- 1867 December 27 - Transfer from Nathan and Bethia W. Richardson husband and wife to Thomas C. Hill. Deed book 71 page 113.
- 1905 April 13 - Transfer from the estate of Thomas C. Hill to Sering P. Dunham, Edward W. Dunham, and E. Smith Lamson partners in S. P. Dunham and Company. Deed book 280 page 402.
- 1906 July 24 - Transfer from Sering P. Dunham and Anna L. husband and wife, Edward W. Dunham and Julia Silvers husband and wife, and E. Smith Lamson and Mary Matilda husband and wife to Sering P. Dunham and Company, a New Jersey corporation. Deed book 291 page 295.

13 North Broad Street

- 1867 December 27 - Transfer from Nathan and Bethia W. Richardson husband and wife to Henderson G. Scudder. Deed book 72 page 182.
- 1898 January 10 - Transfer from the estate of Henderson G. Scudder to Alphonsine C. Scudder Gillespie, Ida Scudder Kennedy and Mary R. Scudder. Deed book 218 page 252.
- 1926 October 12 - Transfer from Ida Scudder Kennedy and Robert A. Kennedy, her husband, Mary Scudder Crawford, Henderson Green Scudder and Alice B., his wife, Annette Gillespie widow and Robert A. Kennedy trustee under the Last Will and Testament of Alphonsine Scudder Gillespie, deceased, to Sering P. Dunham and Co., a New Jersey Corporation. Deed book 595 page 199.

11 & 13 North Broad Street

- 1934 June 27 - Transfer from the trustees and receivers in Bankruptcy re: Sering P. Dunham and Company, a New Jersey corporation to #26 East State Street Realty

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Company, a New Jersey corporation. Deed book 731
pages 1 and 4.

- 1943 July 9 - Transfer from #26 East State Street Realty Company to Susan F. Pritchard. Deed book 857 page 179.
- 1943 September 25 - Transfer from Susan F. Pritchard to Milton H. Goldberg. Deed book 862 page 187.
- 1943 November 1 - Transfer from Milton H. Goldberg to M.G. Realty Co., a New Jersey corporation. Deed book 863 page 203.
- 1952 September - Transfer from M.G. Realty Co., to Charles Levy Associates, Inc. and J.J. Aresty Associates, Inc. Deed book 1209 page 108.

15 North Broad Street

- 1867 December 27 - Transfer from Nathan and Bethia W. Richardson husband and wife to Alexander V. Manning. Deed book 69 page 607.
- 1886 May 15 - Transfer from Alexander V. Manning and Sallie his wife to Ervin V. Richardson. Deed book 149 page 314.
- 1901 December 30 - Transfer from Ervin V. Richardson and Ellen his wife to George Hildebrecht. Deed book 252 page 305.
- 1920 January 15 - Transfer from the estate of George Hildebrecht to Isaac H. Glenn. Deed book 441 page 571.
- 1921 August 1 - Transfer from Isaac H. Glenn to Samuel Levin. Deed book 474 page 450.
- 1931 January 28 - Transfer from Samuel and Mary Levin, husband and wife to Jacob Feinberg. Deed book 675 page 473.
- 1931 February 4 - Transfer from Jacob Feinberg to The #15 North Broad Realty Co. Deed book 676 page 221.
- 1934 November 21 - Sheriff's deed to Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, a Massachusetts corporation. Deed book 729 page 98.
- 1941 June 6 - Transfer from Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co. to Audrey-Paul Inc., a New Jersey corporation. Deed book 820 page 201.

11, 13 & 15 North Broad Street

- 1974 February 15 - Transfer from Charles Levy Associates, Inc. and J.J. Aresty Associates, Inc., and Audrey-Paul Inc., to Plapinger-Platt Downtown Properties, a partnership. Deed book 1962, page 431, 437.
- 1987 September - Transfer from Plapinger-Platt Downtown Properties to DKM Properties Corp., a New Jersey corporation.

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4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Not known.
5. Original plans and construction: 11, 13, and 15 North Broad Street was constructed as a single commercial block, divided into four distinct bays representing the individual stores within.
6. Alterations and additions: After construction, the building was sold and taxed as separate units, until reunited and used as one building by the Dunham's Department Store from 1905. The storefronts of the buildings have been modified and reconfigured several times during the life of the building. There is no remaining evidence of the original structure on the first floor exterior. On the upper floors of the building, projecting molded window hoods have been removed, and some sash replaced.

In 1905, Dunham's enlarged the rear wings of the original buildings from one to four stories, thus boosting their floor area while remaining in the same location. In 1926, the North Broad Street facade was modernized, and the entire store was completely renovated and updated again in 1955.

- B. Historical Context: After the Civil War, the old market house which had stood on Greene Street (now Broad Street) was demolished, and a rush of new building activity took place on both sides of the street. The Federal City Hall was completely remodelled to the Second Empire style. Across the street, a number of old buildings were demolished and replaced with the Lafayette Row in 1867. Lafayette Row initially contained four buildings, united behind a uniform brick facade with Italianate details. The first occupants of the Row were Thomas C. Hill's Fancy Cake Bakery at 11 North Broad; Alexander Manning's Furniture and Upholstery Store at 15 North Broad; and in the middle, the dry goods store of Henderson Scudder.

Scudder was an ambitious young man from Lawrenceville, New Jersey, who opened his own small grocery and dry goods store on State Street in Trenton in 1854. He prospered, and in 1867, was able to purchase a new four story brick building in Lafayette Row. He carried "ready made cloaks, sealskin saques, shawls [and] kid gloves, fine handkerchiefs, parasols, hosiery, collars, cuffs, underwear, and in fact, everything known to the trade".

In 1882, John Scudder and his partner Sering P. Dunham bought the business. The Scudder and Dunham store at 13 North Broad continued the success of the previous firm. After John Scudder left the partnership in 1892, Sering was joined by his son Edward. Renamed Sering P. Dunham & Co., the firm weathered the Depression of 1893, and then embarked on a program of service-oriented merchandizing and physical expansion which soon made it the largest and best-known department store in the city.

By 1905, Dunham's had purchased and leased the adjacent stores of the old Lafayette Row, and expanded their retail space into it. At about the same time, the store bought another building in the block fronting on East State Street. Interconnected, Dunham's became an "L" shaped structure with exposure on two of downtown Trenton's busiest streets.

Dunham & Co. did not purchase the original store building from Henderson Scudder's estate until 1926. At that time, a modern storefront was put on the two adjoining Broad Street buildings. The renovations were designed by local architect William Klemann, who also designed the nearby Wallach Building a few years later.

The prosperity of the Roaring Twenties gave way to the Depression, and Dunham's faced bankruptcy. The store's assets were sold in 1934 to Charles Levy, a recent Wharton Business School graduate who had already made a name for himself with the Allied Department Store chain. Levy brought new business skills to Dunham's, but retained the old (and well-recognized) name and kept Edward Dunham on as chairman of the board until his death in 1944. Levy and his friend Jules Aresty ran the store until 1974, and brought Dunham's to the peak of its success.

Embarking on an expansion program in 1937, their plans were halted by World War II, but not before Dunham's installed the largest air conditioning system in Trenton. Construction resumed in 1946, with renovation of the upper floors of the North Broad Street buildings. Dunham's gained a presence on East Hanover Street in 1951 when it took over the first floor shops in the former Trenton House Hotel. Several of the oldest buildings in the block bounded by Hanover, Warren, Broad, and State Streets were gradually purchased by the department store for use as storage space and service areas. The culmination of Dunham's expansion was the purchase of the adjacent Wallach Building for \$1.5 million in 1954.

The first floor was absorbed into Dunham's selling floor; two upper floors were needed for the store's clerical staff. The Broad Street facade was still the store's main entrance, and in 1954, local architect Louis Kaplan was commissioned to remodel it yet again. At this time, the Italianate cornice and window moldings were removed in order to modernize the nearly century old structure.

In 1955, Dunham's celebrated their centennial, linking the modern department store to Henderson Scudder's dry goods store opened in 1854. During these festivities, Dunham's claimed to be New Jersey's oldest department store, but stressed the changes and modernization which were constantly taking place.

The decline of downtown Trenton in the 1960s and '70s was mirrored in the decreasing maintenance to the Dunham's buildings, and closure of various departments in the store. Dunham's opened stores in suburban malls and shopping centers outside of Trenton, thus aiding the abandonment of retailing in downtown. Sold to another retailer in 1983, the suburban stores were given an infusion of cash and new management; the original Dunham's was vacated and the property sold.

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: The core of the Dunham's Department Store is the Lafayette Row, a group of four story brick commercial buildings, with about half of their original Italianate style detailing on the upper floor facades still visible. The first floor storefronts have been thoroughly remodelled several times, and at the time of recording were boarded up. The architectural integrity of the building is greatly compromised by alterations.
2. Condition of fabric: Dunham's Department Store is in fair condition, with the long-term effects of deferred maintenance apparent. For many years, cosmetic changes were made to the building, to keep abreast of the retailer's need to appear up-to-date, although major structural improvements were not undertaken. The brick facade shows signs of stress in diagonal cracking. Removal of some original detail has been covered with patches of various materials.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The North Broad Street facade of Dunham's is composed of four distinct bays, corresponding to the original units of the Lafayette Block. Number 11 North Broad incorporates two of these bays, totaling 28.06 feet wide; 13 North Broad Street is 30 feet wide, and 15 North Broad is 24.33 feet wide. Together they are 82.39 feet wide. The building extends into the center of the block forming an irregular trapezoid some 160 feet long.
2. Foundations: The full stone-walled basement is not visible from the exterior of the building.
3. Walls: The facade walls are of pressed brick with narrow "butter" joints typical of the latter 19th century. The brick forms a corbelled cornice over each of the four bays. The bay divisions are formed by bricks laid to suggest large blocky quoins. The red brick is currently painted white. Side and rear walls of the building are immediately adjacent to other structures; a portion of the side wall which projects above a neighboring building is red common bond brick painted white.
4. Structural systems: The building was constructed with load-bearing masonry walls and wooden joists spanning the interior. As Dunham's expanded into the different buildings in the Lafayette Row, bearing walls were removed and replaced with rows of steel support columns. The insertion of large storefronts also necessitated addition of steel beams to support the span.
5. Porches and Balconies: A sheet metal transom and cantilevered canopy with recessed lights marks the Broad Street entrance to the store. Large backlighted letters spell "DUNHAMS" on the canopy fascia.
6. Chimneys: None visible.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doors: The exterior doors are part of the modern (1955) glass and metal storefront centered on the Broad Street facade. Three sets of double glass doors in narrow steel frames lead through an interior vestibule to an identical set of doors into the store. Transoms above the glass entryway include the word "Dunham's" painted in script on the glass.

b. Windows: Generally they are similar across the building by story. The second floor windows are set in rectangular openings containing double hung 4/4 wooden sash with a heavy center mullion imitating a casement window. Third floor windows are set under relieving arches, with 4/4 false casement windows similar to those found on the second floor. The round-arched fourth floor windows contain 2/2 wooden sash, the top sash being rounded to fit the opening. All windows are accented by white-painted brownstone sills with small support brackets beneath. Hood moldings have been removed from all windows but the fourth floor, although their outline can still be seen in the brickwork.

8. Roof: Flat roof with tar and gravel covering. A cylindrical wooden water tower with a conical metal top is mounted on the roof of Dunham's. Its metal frame includes a ladder up to the top of the tower. The water tower is painted sky blue with the name "Dunham's" emblazoned in white. It is noted as a local landmark for its visibility and as an advertisement for the Dunham's Department Store.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans:

a. First floor: A large open retail space, punctuated by the mirror-covered internal building supports. The rear of the original building has been extended into the rear of a building fronting 22-26 East State Street since 1905, forming a large "L" plan selling area for Dunham's.

b. Second, third, and fourth floors: The upper floors of the Dunham's Building interconnect with the adjoining Wallach Building, and each floor has been completely renovated for office space. The layout of the upper floors has been so thoroughly altered that the original configuration is no longer apparent.

2. Stairway: On the north wall of the store, near the center of the building, a wide staircase ascends to the upper floors. It is an "L" plan stair, each run located over the other. The stairs are finished with terrazzo. In place of a baluster, the stairway to the second floor has a solid half wall, within which is mounted a simple hand rail. Stairs to the third and fourth floors are completely enclosed.

3. Flooring: Wall to wall carpeting covers a mixture of concrete, terrazzo (first floor only), and wooden flooring. Linoleum tile is laid on the floor in some places in the building.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Throughout the interior, the ceilings have been covered with dropped acoustical tile. The walls are generally covered with sheetrock or plywood paneling.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Interior doors do not exist in the building in favor of open retail space or the "open office" concept of partially open cubicles. Where doors do exist, they are modern steel fire doors in plain steel frames or hollow core wood doors in stock "clamshell" molded frames.
 - b. Windows: Windows have been blocked off from the interior with sheetrock or plywood walls.
6. Decorative features and trim: None.
7. Hardware: No original hardware identified.
8. Mechanical: Forced air heating and cooling systems have been added to the building, the duct work placed above the dropped ceilings. Lighting is primarily through fluorescent fixtures behind frosted plastic panels in the dropped ceiling. Original mechanical and lighting systems are not apparent.

D. Site

1. General siting and orientation: The building faces east from within a densely developed commercial block bounded by North Broad, East State, North Warren, and East Hanover Streets. The entire block was known in the 20th century as the "Dunham Block" for this department store which dominated the area and occupied many of the block's buildings at one time.
2. Historic landscape design: None.
3. Outbuilding: None.

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Part III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original architectural drawings: Not Known.

B. Early Views:

1. Photograph of Scudder & Dunham Store ca. 1883.
2. Photograph of Wilkes Post, Grand Army of the Republic, on parade on North Broad Street ca. 1885. Scudder & Dunham in the background.
3. Photograph of Sering P. Dunham & Company building, ca. 1892.
All of the above were reproduced in a 1955 Trenton Times article about Dunham's. The location of the original photographs is unknown.
4. Photograph of North Broad Street from State Street, ca. 1890. Lafayette Row in background. Original indexed under "Broad Street" in the picture file of the Trentoniana Collection, Trenton Free Public Library.
5. Line drawing (engraving?) of 15 North Broad Street in Trenton City Directory of 1891, p. 3.
6. Line drawing (engraving?) of 11 North Broad Street (identified in the advertisement as 43 North Greene Street; street names changed ca. 1880) in Trenton City Directory of 1872.
7. Photograph of North Broad Street, 1892. Lafayette Row in background. Original indexed under "Trolleys" in the picture file of the Trentoniana Collection, Trenton Free Public Library.
8. Postcard "Broad Street, North from State, Trenton, N.J." ca. 1916-20. Courtesy of Martin P. Winar, private collector of Trentoniana.
9. Postcard "South Broad Street, Trenton, N.J." ca. 1920. Although in the distance South Broad Street's buildings are somewhat visible, the foreground is of the block of North Broad Street between Hanover and State Streets. Dunham's is on the right in the foreground. Courtesy of Martin P. Winar, private collector of Trentoniana.
10. Photograph of North Broad Street from Hanover Street, ca. 1925. Dunham's centered in image. In the picture file of the Trentoniana Collection of the Trenton Free Public Library.

C. Interviews: None.

D. Bibliography:

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1. Primary and unpublished sources:

- a. Real Estate Transactions, Mercer County Hall of Records, Trenton, New Jersey.
- b. Tax assessment records, Tax Office, City of Trenton.

2. Secondary and published sources:

a. Books

Directory of Trenton, New Jersey. Trenton, N.J.
[title and publisher varies], 1854-1971.

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Hightstown, Pennington, and Hopewell. New York, Newark,
N.J., and Phila.: Historical Publishing Co., 1882.

Kratzer, Wayne, comp. Kratzer's Directory of Business and
Professional Men, Condensed, of Philadelphia, Trenton,
Allentown, Wilmington, Pottstown, and West Chester. Allen-
town, Pa.: Wayne Kratzer, n.d. (ca. 1895).

Trenton, City of. North Ward Historic Resources Survey.
Vol. I, Trenton, N.J., 1980.

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Bridgeport, CT: American Directory and Publishing Co.,
1893.

Trenton Historical Society. Trenton, New Jersey 1679-1929:
A History of Its Growth and Development Through Four
Centuries. Trenton, N.J.: Trenton Times Co., 1929.

b. Maps

Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County, New Jersey.
Philadelphia: Everts & Stewart, 1875.

Insurance Maps of Trenton, New Jersey. New York:
Sanborn-Perris Map Co., 1890.

Insurance Maps Trenton, New Jersey. Vol. 1, New York:
Sanborn Map Company, 1908.

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c. Periodicals

"Dunham's, 100 Year Old, Has Big Plans for Future".
Trenton Times, September 18, 1955.

Hastedt, Karl. "Dunham's Centennial Celebration Points
Up Growing Greater With Trenton Theme". Trenton Magazine,
June 1955.

Lane, Sally. "Then and Now: An Expansive Store on North
Broad Street". Sunday Times Magazine, November 30, 1980.

Trenton Chamber of Commerce. "S.P. Ounham & Co. Eighty-
Third Anniversary". Trenton Magazine, May 1937.

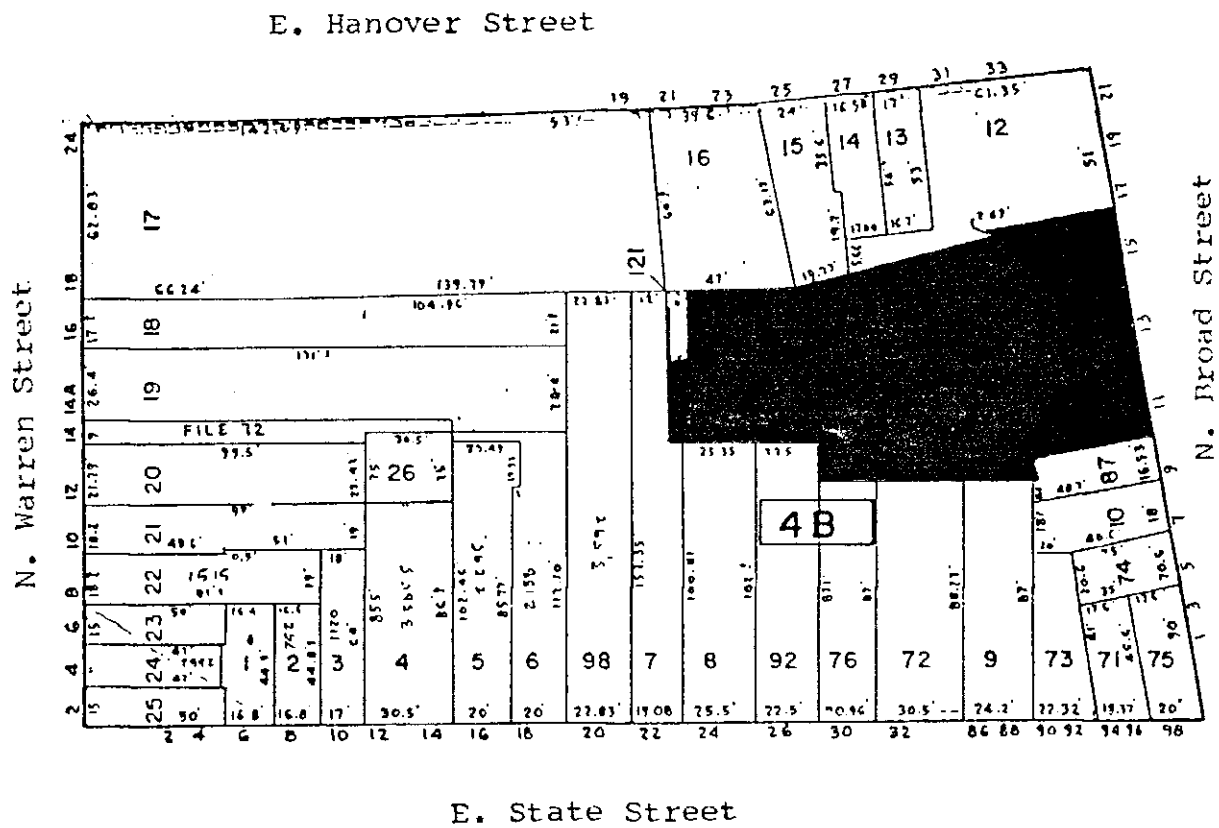
Part IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation for Ounham's Department Store was prepared for OKM Properties Corp. under an agreement with the City of Trenton, the Office of New Jersey Heritage, and DKM Properties Corp. The site was recorded to HABS standards to mitigate the loss of historic buildings impacted by a project utilizing funds from HUD through an Urban Development Action grant. The site is under development by OKM Properties as the Capital Center project, a mixed retail and office building containing 331,000 square feet. It is scheduled for completion in 1989.

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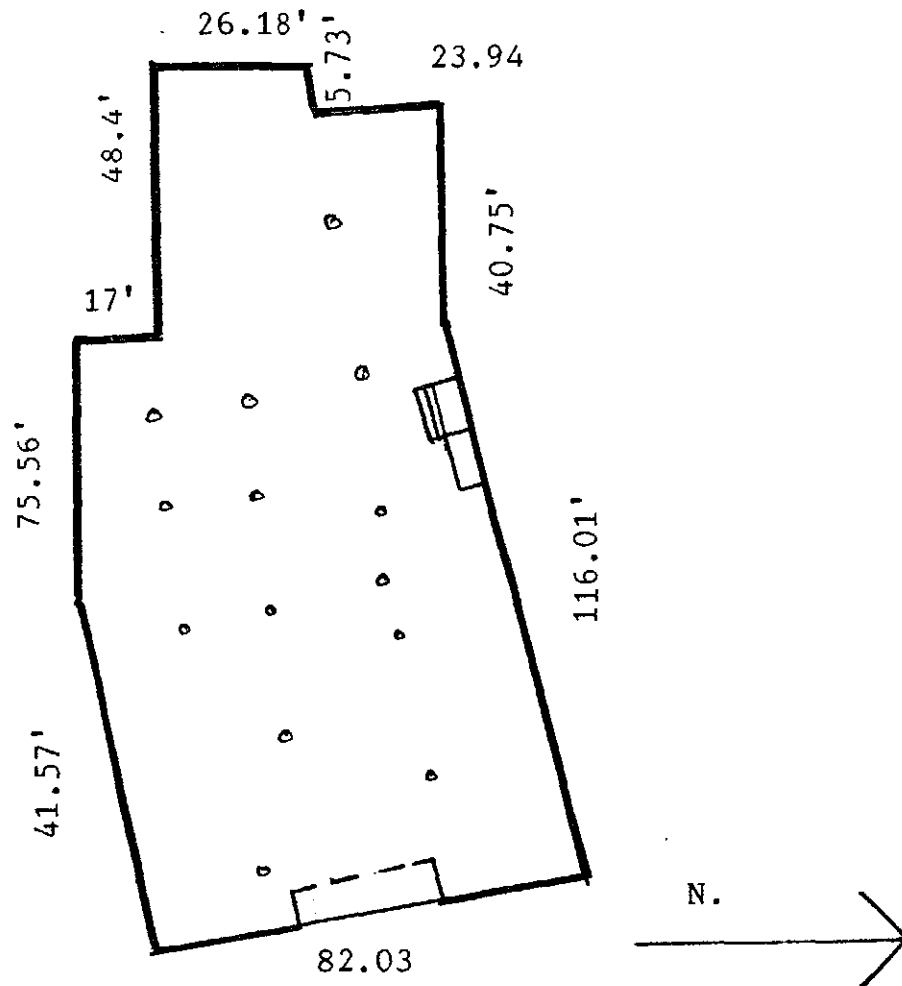
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Site Plan



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Floor Plan



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Historic View of the building:
"South [sic] Broad Street, Trenton, N.J." Postcard ca.
1920, courtesy of Martin P. Winar, private collector of
Trentoniana. Dunham's is visible on the right hand side
foreground of the photograph.